

# Children's Environmental Health



## Childhood Cancer

### 7. Childhood Cancer Cases and Rates

In the United States, approximately 8,600 children were diagnosed with cancer and 1,500 children died from the disease in 2001. While the national death rate from childhood cancer have declined due to early detection and better treatment, there has been a rise in the incidence of childhood cancer. Cancer is now the leading cause of death, by disease, among children in the United States under the age of 15.<sup>1</sup>

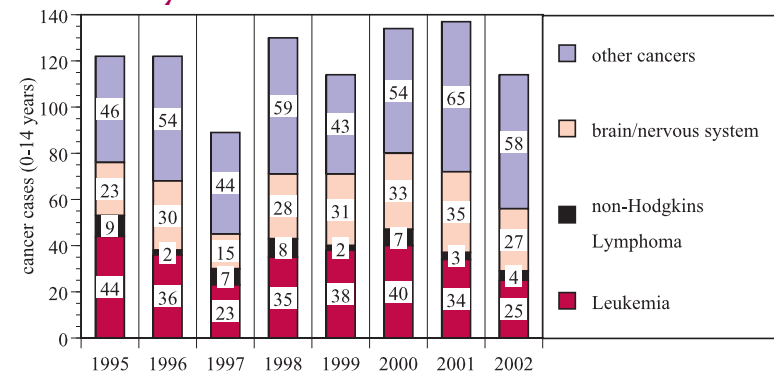
Among the 12 major types of childhood cancers, leukemias (blood cell cancers), brain and other central nervous system tumors account for more than half of the new cases.<sup>2</sup> Soft tissue sarcoma and brain cancer incidence increased nationwide by more than 25 percent while acute lymphocytic leukemia showed an increase of 20 percent.<sup>3</sup> Some experts consider diagnostic improvements as a sufficient explanation for the increases found in childhood cancer incidence while others consider that additional factors, including environmental contaminants, may be involved.<sup>4</sup>

In 2002, a total of 20,801 invasive cancer cases (adult and children) were reported in Kentucky compared to 20,204 cases in 1998—a 3 percent increase. Cancer of the trachea, bronchus and lung was the most common cancer occurring in the state, accounting for 20 percent of all the Kentucky cancer cases in 1998-2002. Kentucky has the highest lung cancer incidence and mortality rates in the nation.<sup>5</sup>

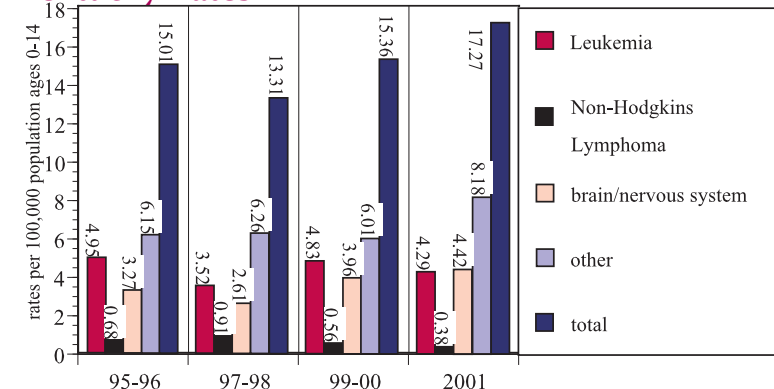
A review of childhood cancer cases in Kentucky (0 to 14 years) reveals a total of 114 cases in 2003. Leukemia and brain/nervous system cancers were among the leading childhood cancers, based on data collected by the Kentucky Cancer Registry. Five year invasive incidence rates (1997-2001) for total pediatric cancers (ages 0-14) in Kentucky of 14.90 per 100,000 children was slightly above the national rate of 14.73 per 100,000 children.

### Indicator 7. Childhood Cancer Cases and Rates<sup>endnote</sup>

#### Kentucky Cases



#### Kentucky Rates



CD - Table 9. Pediatric cancers by county.



#### Comparison of Pediatric Cancer Rates (1997-2001)\*

	National rate**	Kentucky rate
Leukemia	4.83	4.17
Brain/Central Nervous System	3.01	3.53
Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma	0.59	0.67
Other	6.30	6.54
Total	14.73	14.90

\*Cancer rates per 100,000 population ages 0 - 14. \*\*National rate based on Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) program [www.seer.cancer.gov](http://www.seer.cancer.gov). SEER database - SEER 11 Regs + AK Public-Use, Nov. 2003 Submission for Expanded Races (1992-2001) National Cancer Institute, DCCPS, Surveillance Research Program, Cancer Statistics Branch, April 2004, based on Nov. 2003 submission. 11 Regs include Atlanta, CT, Detroit, N.M, San Francisco-Oakland, Seattle-Puget Sound, UT, Los Angeles, San-Jose - Monetary.  
Source: Kentucky Cancer Registry.